Safety Net

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Safety Net

by femmesteve

Summary

Will Graham is 16 years old and with a very troubled mind. As therapy continues to fail him, Will continues to explore and expand his interests in the macabre and taboo, starting with the involvement of a mysterious man who promises only encouragement.

Notes

Hi! This is not yet finished, but the entire thing is planned and WILL be finished very soon. This is the first of four chapters, and things only get more fucked. Updates will be posted every Sunday if i can help it. Besides that, thank you for reading and giving me a chance, I know it's kind of weird in the beginning. Do bear with me.
This chapter is the only "short" one.

Fascino Macabre

Will taps tirelessly on the arm of his uncomfortable chair during his therapy session after school. He hates Doctor Chilton because of how he talks down on him, as though he were a dog and not a person. This drives Will to often not cooperate with the man, giving half truths, or not answering his questions at all. Doctor Chilton once told him that his condition would grow worse if he continued to do this, visibly annoyed with the boy's lack of respect. This made Will smile,

"I want to talk to Doctor Bloom," He had responded defiantly, and his smile turned into a grin at how the man ground his teeth and promptly left the office.

Doctor Alana Bloom was a pretty woman with dark hair and a soft, patient voice. Will told her everything that he refused to tell Doctor Chilton, in hopes that he would be referred to her instead, but he was refused. Alana was happy to treat the boy, but Doctor Chilton proved himself to be a spiteful man with too much pride.

*"*Will *is my patient, and when he gets tired of being ill, he'll talk to me."* Doctor Chilton had sniffed, and Alana, not wanting to interfere, agreed to leave the situation be.

Now that his treatment with Doctor Chilton was several months in the making, Will no longer wished to talk to Doctor Bloom either. She had given up so easily. Too abruptly for Will to not hold a grudge against her.

Doctor Chilton cleared his throat, startling Will from his thoughts. He slowly raised his eyes to look at the man properly, his blue eyes hard.

"You look tired, Will," Doctor Chilton commented, "Did you sleep last night?" He asked.

Will breathed a laugh, slumping in his chair, "You don't care." He said.

"That's just not true," Doctor Chilton insisted. He bristled when this drew another laugh out of his patient.

"Yes. Fitfully." Will finally said.

Doctor Chilton sighed, pausing for a moment as he wrote something down. When he looked back at the boy he saw that he had seemingly lost interest again, staring at the ceiling. He kept himself from clearing his throat again, instead speaking calmly,

"You're taking the night medicine?" Doctor Chilton asked.

Will didn't bother to pull his gaze from the ceiling, "Oh, yes," He responded truthfully, "It doesn't help. It makes me.." He swallowed thickly as he chose his words, "Hot." He finally said.

Doctor Chilton was visibly amused as he wrote Will's words down, "The pills don't do that, Will, that's something else entirely."

Will began to tap his fingers again, forcing himself to ask, "What, then?"

The therapist quirked his lips, tracing his capped pen across the clipboard, "Have you tried sleeping with a fan on?"

Will does not find this funny.

The light from Will's laptop illuminated his face as he peers at something on the screen. It's nearly midnight and Will hasn't bothered to touch his medicine, choosing instead to roam the internet as he usually does in order to forget Doctor Chilton's atrocious face and voice. He was on the website of his choice for worldwide news, enamored in a story about a cannibalistic cult's recent victims. He clings to every gruesome detail, chewing on his lip as he closes his eyes, taking time to *envision* what they refused to show on the site. He, of course, recalls to mind that there are many websites that would have the missing gruesome images that he sought. There had been many times where Will had resorted to these sites in search of what his imagination could not provide him. These sites, however, were hard to find if one didn't know what to look for, but luckily Will knew exactly what he wanted and could have them pulled up in no time.

Will shifted to sit up properly, putting his laptop on his lap as he scrolled through the first website, happy to find that the first images were of the victims from the news story. The mutilated corpses were lined up on the floor, which no one had bothered to clean up, leaving everything surrounding the main focus a complete mess. Will could appreciate that, he decided as he continued to scroll past the first images, soaking up all that he had missed in his short absence. Terrible things happened everyday, and thank God there were weirdos willing to photograph the events and upload them for people like Will to observe. He is just beginning to become bored (and admittedly, tired) when he notices a particularly fancy ad beside the scrollbar. When on these sites, Will never clicks on any ads, scared to death that they will lead him to a bestiality video that he will be unable to click out of, or something far worse, the likes of which he cannot even imagine. One could never be too careful when exploring the Deep Web, he reminded himself.

However, this ad is particularly fetching, and Will finds himself hovering his mouse dangerously close to the flashing link. It's bright red pixels resemble dripping blood, and the words "CANNIBAL CAFE" are prominent in bold font. Driven by his ever growing curiosity, he clicks on the link and is immediately transferred to a new tab. His heart races within his chest as the site loads, the same red pixels sparkling at him invitingly. There are many links on the front page that Will would like to click on right away, but he settles for merely reading the important looking paragraph that welcomes him to the obscure site. The tone is strangely friendly, especially as it is describing the horrifying contents of the site. It promises pictures, as well as recipes, guides, and even chat rooms. Will cannot decide where

he wants to begin, a longing to explore everything at once overcoming him in great waves. He decides to start with the images tab, and is delighted to find that beneath them the publishers have the option to describe their encounter with the meat. He spends a good thirty minutes reading about gruesome stories of preparation and feasting, glancing to his window and door every once in a while as a nervous habit, which is amplified tenfold at the time.

Will is too scared to enter any of the chat rooms, but is all too eager to click on the "MEAT ROOM" tab, which is cleverly named, Will thinks sarcastically. On this page there are images and contact information of people who wish to be eaten, and despite the outright terrifying nature of it, Will finds himself beginning to scroll through them curiously. Most of the women want money in exchange for morbid sexual services, while most of the men are looking for these services. Will tries to imagine being aroused by the feeling of someone quite literally eating him alive, tearing into his arm with their teeth and *ripping* the flesh away. He is unable to find the appeal, as expected.

There is an option to offer yourself to be consumed, and while Will does not find the idea of being cannibalized sexy, he finds it interesting enough. On impulse he begins to make an entry of his own, going under the alias of Winston and saying that he is eighteen rather than sixteen. He puts his actual email along with the fake information, liking the idea of coming into contact with an actual, experienced cannibal that he can talk to, even if said cannibal believes that he will be eating him. After he submits his entry, Will realizes that he is rather sleepy, and even though he will be awake again in a mere two short hours for school, he decides to finally fall asleep, making sure to erase the Cannibal Café from his web history before falling onto his pillow.

Will awakes feeling unrested, but not unwilling to move, very used to the feeling at this point in his life. After a night of internet browsing his morning routine is very simple, consisting of throwing on clean clothes and forcing a granola bar down his throat before leaving for the bus stop with unruly hair and tiredness prominent underneath his eyes. His day is the same as any other day would be, except much better because he doesn't have therapy after school. This frees Will to go home and immediately open his email. Though he hadn't expected to get one so soon, there was a single email from someone who had seen his entry. He spent several moments staring at the preview of the message, which was simply: "Hello, Winston..."

He contemplated deleting the email, and even deleting his whole email account, but instead he takes a moment to calm his nerves and then open it. He didn't know what he had expected, but the email seemed to be rather normal, and why not? It read as follows,

"Hello, Winston. I saw your entry on the website Cannibal Café, and though it was submitted fairly recently, I wanted to ask you if your offer still remained. It's very easy for someone to change their mind about these things, I understand."

- H.L

Will's heart raced inside of his chest as he read the email over and over again, nervous excitement bubbling up in his throat like vomit. Would it be inappropriate to respond? It was what he had wanted, after all. A conversation with an actual, practicing cannibal. The thought made him nauseous. He started to type his response,

"Hello, thank you for responding. I wasn't expecting anyone to email me at all, and definitely not as fast as you did. The proposition still stands, but this could change. I would love it if you could talk to me for a short time about your practices. I'm very curious, and it will most likely sway my decision in the end."

- Winston.

Will sent the email before he could decide against himself, chewing his lip painfully as he waited for it to be delivered. He had no intentions at all to be eaten, actually, but he wasn't going to let this stranger know that until he got what he wanted. It was a good plan, he thought.

"I will answer any questions that you may have, as long as you answer a few of my own. I will continue to tell you the truth as long as I believe that you are doing the same."

- H.L

Will nodded at his screen, thinking this to be fair. He spent the next hour or so emailing back and forth with this person, asking and answering questions as he saw fit. None of the questions that he was asked made him feel particularly uncomfortable, as they were all questions you would expect to be asked by a cannibal interested in eating you. How tall was he? How much did he weigh? Things similar to this. Will's own questions were a bit more prying, however all of them were answered to his complete satisfaction. It wasn't until Will received a completely blunt, and short email toward the end of their conversation that he felt nervous again.

"When will I be able to meet my meat, Winston?"

-H.L

Will chewed on his lip, his mind beginning to race. Could he stop responding and be done with this forever? That didn't seem fair, he thought to himself, beginning to fret. His hands began to shake slightly over the keyboard as he typed a message back, hoping that his response would suffice for a civil parting.

"I'm very sorry, I should have told you before, but I'm not really 18. I'm 16 and without a license or car, for that matter. I take the bus everywhere, and depending on how far away you live, that could be terribly expensive."

-Winston

It was completely juvenile, and he wished that he could re-word the whole thing. He sounded like a dumb teenager, or worse, a scared one. He didn't want this stranger to think that he was weak.

"My dear, Winston, I can take you in my car to my home in Baltimore, if you'll allow it."

-H.L

Will resisted the urge to slam his laptop shut in fear. This had progressed much farther than he had intended it to, and now he was facing the possibility of meeting an alleged cannibal. He couldn't help but wonder what this stranger looked like. He didn't doubt that it was a man.. From there, Will couldn't slow his thoughts down for anything, and his curiosity was steadily growing by the minute. After some short research, Will could tell that the drive from Wolftrap to Baltimore was a mere hour by car. The knowledge excited him to his very core, and he had to take a couple of minutes to actually process his decision before sealing his fate. Was he going to allow this to continue farther? He was beginning to think that yes, he was, and he was going to enjoy it. Enjoy the rush of fear as he climbed into this man's car and allowed him to take him all the way to Maryland, where he could be murdered and then cannibalized. Not unlike the victims that he read about daily. He could be like them, he could become apart of the *art.*

"I live in Wolftrap Virginia, and that's not very far away after all. There is a church right when you enter the city limits. Would you mind terribly picking me up there?"

-Winston.

"Of course. I assume you'll have school on Friday, but I can take you that afternoon."
-H.L

Will felt an odd rush of heat spread throughout his body. *Take me for consumption./*

Thursday night was the breaking point for Will, as he decided at last what he truly wanted to do about his situation. He laid in his bed that night, biting the inside of his mouth while he weighed the several outcomes. He kept imagining getting into a mysterious car in the church parking lot, never to see or be seen ever again. He would be taken to a frightening home in the woods, laid out on a cold operating table and strapped down so that he couldn't move. The cannibal would look him in the eyes, his gaze hard and hungry as he gagged him with several rags, the texture rough inside his mouth. There would be several moments of anticipation and then *searing pain* as he is stripped of his skin.

Will swallowed hard, pretending that he was not hard inside of his pajama pants. The situation inside of his mind switched around, and this time he was again in the home of the cannibal. This house was warm and inviting. Will is treated to several glasses of warm champagne until his vision blurs and his limbs are heavy. He is laid out on a bed instead of a table, and stripped bare. The press of a warm mouth was against his body, the glide of a tongue against his skin, *salivating* for the taste.

Will stuck his fingers inside of his mouth, sucking just to taste his skin. The scenario inside of his head had gone dark again. This time he was the cannibal, straddling a struggling victim as he inhaled the metallic scent of their blood. There was a knife in his hand that had been previously in use. He raised it to his lips and ran his tongue along the dirtied edge, moaning when his blood mingled with the other.

Will comes inside of his pants, moaning around his fingers. The blood around his mouth was now dribble, and he pulled the digits free with a slick sound before furiously wiping his mouth dry. He breathed hard into the dark of his room for several moments before he was thinking again.

Never to sit through another therapy session again, never to see Doctor Chilton's smug face and be told he could never recover if he didn't listen and repeat, and listen and repeat, and listen and REPEAT. Will ground his teeth together before he forced himself to become calm again. He fell asleep while imagining the many things that "taking him" could refer to.

La Corruzione delle Mente

Chapter Notes

I edited this chapter in a hurry and im so very sorry for any mistakes that didn't catch.
Happy New Year, good wishes to all.
This chapter includes sex in which one of the participants is under the age of consent.

When he awakes, Will is not nervous. He goes about his day with an excited fever. He would not be attending his therapy session with Doctor Chilton after school. He was thinking of this and nothing else. He was afraid that he would change his mind if he dared. Will took the wrong bus on purpose, of course, and he sat alone beside a window. He doesn't allow himself to be scared when the bus finally comes to a halt. It would be turning around after this last stop, because the city limits were to begin. Leaving him all alone with no way back into Wolftrap. Will got out and spent several moments standing beside the 'BUS STOP' sign, gazing out at the church building. His lip trembled just slightly at the sight of a car parked exactly one road over in the snowy lot. It was black, and Will knew that it was waiting for him.

He adjusted his scarf and then crossed his arms over himself tightly, beginning to walk on trembling legs. When he is close enough, the passenger door swings open, causing him to jump. His breathing speeds up and he is frightened to death, *God*, he is so scared. He wants this, he does, *he does*. He gets into the car and shuts the door, greeted by warm air and a clean scent.

"Hello." A voice says from his left.

Will turns his head and loosens his scarf so that he can speak, before responding with a small, "Hello."

The man does not look menacing. Rather expensive, if he were forced to describe him. Clean, dusky blond hair with the beginnings of silver and sunken brown eyes. The beginnings of a smile turned up the man's lips as he allowed Will to observe him for a moment more.

"It's rude to stare at people, Winston." It was not chastisement in his voice, but rather amusement.

"I'm sorry," Will averted his eyes to his hands, spooked by the man's attempt to ensnare him into direct eye contact.

The car was put into drive, and Will's heart began to race in anticipation and fear. He shifted his eyes back to the man's face nervously, before turning around in his seat and watching

Wolftrap disappear from the backwindow. When he was satisfied, he sat back down properly and even buckled his belt. He licked his chapped lips, and gazed out the window.

"What's your name, sir?" Will asked, forcing himself to at least turn his head in the man's direction. It wasn't necessary, however, because the man didn't bother to take his eyes from the road.

"You won't know me long enough for my name to matter to you," He responded, though he must have sensed the boy's discomfort, because he also added, "However, you may call me Doctor Lecter."

Will wrinkled his nose, "You're a doctor?"

"I'm a therapist," Doctor Lecter said easily, and this time he did look at Will.

Will didn't bother to hide his discontent, "I had a therapist," He announced drearily.

"I'm not suprised at all. You made arrangements to be cannabilized by a stranger." Doctor Lecter said.

Will hummed, mostly in agreement.

"Do you often make dinner plans with mentally ill children, doctor?" Will asked tentatively despite the boldness of his question.

"No." It was said with a smile, and Will found himself unable to hold back a smile of his own.

"My real name is Will," Will says after a while, wanting to hear the accented reply.

"Thank you for telling me that," The man says, and it's satisfaction enough for the boy to remain quiet the rest of the ride.

They arrive at Doctor Lecter's home in comfortable silence, and Will got out of the car in awe of the place. The evening wind was merciless against his face, but still his scarf hung limply around his neck, forgotten. He followed the man to the front door and obediently stomped the snow from his boots when instructed to do so. Doctor Lecter gave him a brief once over before letting him inside and relieving him of his coat and scarf. He didn't address the man's hospitality, too scared of when his kindness would come to an end. Doctor Lecter instructed him to remove his boots and then wait for him in the living room, which Will does quietly.

Doctor Lecter joins him not long after Will has settled himself into a large, leather chair. He looked up to see that the man has brought a decanter and two glasses.

"Don't worry, Will. You will be *very* comfortable when you die," Doctor Lecter insisted, pouring the contents of the decanter into a glass, "Do you like wine?" He asked, pausing.

Will recalled to his memory the select few times that he had tried the drink, and there weren't many. Once at his aunts wedding, the wine was pink and very sweet, he liked it then. However the other time was a sneaky sip from his mother's glass at a restaurant. It was a

dusky red and very dry, Will didn't like it then. However, this wine was neither of those things and looked promising. It was a pearly, yellow color. Will nodded, and Doctor Lecter smiled at this while he poured. Will a glass.

Will accepted the glass, studying the contents before taking a small sip. He licked his lips and took a bigger swallow.

"Moscato." Doctor Lecter said simply.

Will lifted his eyes to the voice, finding that the man had moved to the chair beside his. He held his glass with both hands, peering into it.

"When will you eat me?" Will asked, and he is sorry when this does not visibly suprise the man.

"When you are ready," Doctor Lecter said, his amused tone making the boy's cheeks burn slightly.

"What if I'm ready now?" Will speaks into his glass, almost hiding in it.

"You're not." Doctor Lecter deadpanned.

Will is quiet after that, choosing to occupy his mouth with the wine instead. He could tell that the psychiatrist appreciated that. Will finished his glass and set it on the table, successfully relaxed by then. He put his elbow on the arm of the chair and rested his head in his hand, observing the room that they sat in with wide eyes.

"Will," Doctor Lecter handed him his glass back, filled again.

Will accepted the glass without a word, surprised, but unwilling to complain. Doctor Lecter's motives were becoming very clear to the boy. The temptation to talk was creeping up on Will, the faintly warm buzz he felt becoming something more as time went on. However, before he could speak again, Doctor Lecter had stood and left him, talking of starting dinner. *I thought I was dinner.*. Will thought with a quiet giggle.

Will's sips turned into gulps until he could safely set his glass down on the table, suddenly having the urge to stand and move around. He wandered from the living room until he found Doctor Lecter, who had not lied about his whereabouts. He was in the kitchen, and Will couldn't help but inhale deeply the delicious smells that permeated the room.

"I got bored," Will explained when he was acknowledged, though the question had gone unasked.

Accepting the boy's presence, Doctor Lecter continued on until he was finished. He lead Will into the dining room with a hand on his back, sitting him down with more wine before disappearing back into the kitchen. He returned with their dinner balanced carefully in his hands, the smell and look of the food making Will's mouth water. It was presented as lamb, but Will felt as though he knew better.

After dinner, Will was very pleasantly drunk and full, entertaining Doctor Lecter by opening his mind to him. He asked questions about other countries, and Doctor Lecter's education, prattling on about how he wished that he had put his mind to better use when he had the chance. He then began to complain about his brain itself, and how it wasn't fair that it wasn't a very good one.

"Will you taste my illness?" Will asked dumbly, blinking sad blue eyes at the man.

"Here?" Doctor Lecter put his hand on top of Will's head, smiling and shaking his own, "No. Your brain will taste as good as any."

"So you will eat it, then!" It wasn't a question, and a grin spread across the boy's face, "How will you have me, Doctor Lecter?" He asked, then.

Doctor Lecter's lips pressed together in thought, examining Will very carefully. Will bristled underneath the attention, but eventually lifts his gaze to lock with the man's. His breath quickened in the slightest, and he realized how vulnerable he felt in that momemt. Drunk and so small compared the man, he couldn't help but wonder if the psychiatrist would kill him then. He would let him, he decided.

"Will you have me now, instead?" Will doesn't break their eye contact, falling over the arm of the chair and spreading his limbs in offering.

A mischievous sort of smile tugs up Will's lips, "I'm yours now, we saw to that," He said matter of factly.

Doctor Lecter stood from his own chair and began to approach Will, smiling almost mockingly at how the boy began to curl in on himself immediately. He pressed a hand on Will's chest, seeking out for his pulse. It was steadily picking up.

"We did," The man agreed, grabbing Will's face in his other hand, just tight enough to grip his jaw and cheeks, "So I'll have you when I feel like it." He purrs, and Will can't help the whimper that catches in his throat.

Doctor Lecter removed his hand from Will's face, admiring for a moment the temporary fingerprints on the flesh. He patted Will's chest and then turned on his heel.

"I will bring you some clothes to sleep in," He announced with his back turned to him.

Will sobered immediately, sitting up in his chair with wide eyes, "You're not even going to-," He stopped, swallowing the rest of his sentance.

"Eager to die, William?" Doctor Lecter asked, smiling at the silence, "Fascinating boy.." He commented as he left.

Will's eyes fluttered open slowly, and he blinked sleepily at an unfamiliar ceiling fan. Realization hit him like a bat as he sat up in the large bed he had been placed in. His clothes

had been washed and folded neatly, and he couldn't help but kick them off of the mattress spitefully. He regretted this however, as he slid out of the bed aswell and proceeded to dress on the floor. He lazily lifted his hips to slide his jeans on before pulling his sweater over his bed head. He trudged around the house until he found his host, who was washing dishes in the kitchen. The wall clock read 11:00.

"Good afternoon," Doctor Lecter greeted the boy without looking up from the sink, "You didn't bring a change of clothes, so I washed what you wore yesterday." He explained.

"I didn't anticipate living this long.." Will responded gruffly, pulling himself to sit at the counter.

Doctor Lecter smiled at this and turned around to lean against the sink, finally seeing the sleepy boy's form. He reached into the fridge for a container, "Hungry?"

"Oh, yes," Will nodded, his stomach sounding in agreement, "Please don't," He said when the psychiatrist began to put it into a microwave.

Doctor Lecter paused, and then complied, sticking a fork into the container and giving it to Will. Will immediately dug into the leftovers, eating ravenously and trying to keep his manners while doing so. He of course hadn't been paying attention to the way his teeth occasionally scraped the metal utensil, or how Doctor Lecter had been becoming increasingly more annoyed by it. Eventually the fork was grabbed from his hand, and a noise of discontent left Will's lips at the intrusion. He watched as Doctor Lecter speared a mouthful of the food and then held it back to the boy's mouth,

"Take it with your lips, please," He instructed.

Will's face colored in the slightest, but he obeyed anyway, taking the food off of the fork with his lips. The man smiled at the absence of noise, indicating with a hard gaze that this was what he expected from now on.

"Very good," He said simply, handing back the utensil and then returning to the dishes.

Doctor Lecter took the dish from him and added it to the soapy sink, before directing Will to a hall bathroom. He was met with a new toothbrush and hairbrush, and he used both of them before slipping out to wander as long as he could. He ended up sitting in the living room with a book written in a strange language. Of course he couldn't read it, but it had interesting pictures and served just fine as entertainment.

"Would you like a dictionary?"

Will jumped, nearly flinging the book into oblivion whilst doing so. He turned an accusing gaze toward the man.

"No thank you," Will responded, bristling when Doctor Lecter rounded the chair that he was occupying in order to read over his shoulder.

"Are you positive? It will help you to read that," He insisted.

Will tipped his head against the back of the chair, "No," He repeated.

"Would you like my help instead?" Doctor Lecter took the book from Will, who slumped in response, "Bored?" He asked, thumbing through the book.

"Mmmmmm," Will hummed in affirmation, holding his hand up for the book to be deposited back into. When nothing came he looked up again to find Doctor Lecter gone, and with his book too!

Will stood up in a flourish, thinking that he'd very much like to be eaten now. He missed his laptop and books written in English, he thought with a frown as he left the living room in search of the man. Tentatively, he turned into an open room, presumably a study. Doctor Lecter was seated at a desk and reading from a paper, calligraphy pen poised importantly in his hand.

"I was looking for you," Will announced as he inched into the room, looking around.

"You've found me," Came the uninterested reply.

Will bit his lip and began to hone in on the huge bookshelf that was pushed against one wall, stretching across the expanse. "May I look through these?" He asked.

"Of course," Said Doctor Lecter, "Just be sure to put any that you take back in their proper places."

Will hummed and let his hand run across their spines, reading the many titles as he passed them. He stopped in his tracks to pull one out, staring intensely at the beautiful cover.

'The Egyptian Guide to Cannibalism' it read, and Will began to flip through it with interest.

"Doctor Lecter?" He called.

"Yes, Will?" The man looked up briefly.

"Will you eat me tonight?" He questioned, biting his lip as he gazed at an image depicting human sacrifice through hyroglyphics.

It was quiet for a moment, the only sound a soft scratch as Doctor Lecter signed a paper with a practiced flourish. It brought goose flesh to Will's arms.

"Would you like that?" Doctor Lecter enquired in a careful tone, watching Will from his spot across the room.

"Yes." Will confirmed without hesitation, closing the book.

"Will," The man put his papers aside and gestured with a finger for the boy to approach him.

Will walked to the psychiatrist's desk slowly, clutching his book in his hands. He swallowed and sat in the chair opposite of the desk, forced to face the man.

"Why do you think that you are ready to die," The doctor questioned, suddenly very serious as he steepled his fingers in front of his face.

Will furiously averted his gaze from the man's face and directed it back onto his lap. He rubbed *'The Egyptian Guide to Cannibalism'* with nervous fingers, letting the silence settle around them. "Have you changed your mind?" Will asked.

"No. But have you?" Doctor Lecter redressed with ease.

"No!" Will sounded almost offended, and for a brief moment his eyes returned to meet the man's.

"You are very young. There are many things you have not yet experienced. Even so, you are here in my home begging me to kill and eat you. Explain this to me, please," Doctor Lecter watched Will's expression change accordingly. He found himself enamored at how the boy's emotions clearly gnawed at him, present on his beautiful face.

"Are you trying to change my mind, Doctor?" Will asked the man, trying to keep his tone cool.

"Not at all," Doctor Lecter shifted in his seat, "I find you very.." A small smile twitched his thin lips, *"Appetizing."*

Will stood then, tossing the book carelessly into the seat in his place. He felt a twinge of annoyance at the man's lack of response to his sudden actions.

"Doctor Lecter," Will began, a slight arrogance to his voice that told the man Will was about to do something about the state of his emotion. He thought that he was about to extract revenge on him for trying to pick him apart. Doctor Lecter watched the boy come around the desk with interest in his eyes, "I'm a virgin," Will continued, confirmimg the man's suspicion as he sat himself on the desk. He carefully gathered the rest of the papers in his shaking hands, before stacking them neatly and holding them out for the doctor to take.

"Is this what you resent about dying so young?" Doctor Lecter began to play along, pretending that he had not caught on to the boy's ploy.

"Oh, yes," Will nodded, his eyes cut at the man in an almost sarcastic way, "Why don't you fuck me, doctor? Then you can kill me with a clean conscience-"

Doctor Lecter grabbed Will's wrist in a quick and brusque movement, making the boy let go of the papers with a pained gasp. The papers floated to the floor around his feet, but he made no movement to pick them up, keeping his eyes hard on Will.

"I'm afraid I'll have to ask you not to be so crude with your words," The man insisted.

Will used his free hand to grab the man's larger one, a soft grunt leaving his lips as he tried to free his poor wrist.

"Doctor Lecter, you're hurting me," Will whined.

The man tightened his grip in response, feeling the delicate bones shift underneath his hand. A few tears escaped the boy's eyes, and he stood so that he was above Will. He swiped a thumb beneath Will's eyes to catch the moisture beginning to leak from there. He caressed the side of the boy's face, loosening his grip. Will's eyes flew open, the panic burned into the orbs telling of his regret.

"Dear Will," Doctor Lecter cooed condescendingly, and Will flinched at the words, "There are far more polite ways to ask for what you want." He told the boy with a cool smile, almost devilish in nature. Will shifted uncomfortably.

Will glanced away, only for the man to grab his chin and force his eyes onto him again. Despite this, they still darted away uncomfortably. He squeezed Will's throbbing wrist in warning, and immediately blue eyes found his again. Will swallowed, his breath coming out in nervous pants.

"Puh," Will's voice wavered and he swallowed again, "Please take my virginity before you kill me, Doctor Lecter." He whispered.

Doctor Lecter smiled then, indicating that he approved of Will's new attitude, "Very well," His voice had dropped into a grating purr.

He dropped Will's wrist in order to touch his hair, winding a brown curl around his finger before tugging painfully on the lock. Will gritted his teeth in order to keep himself quiet. He eased himself back slightly, propping himself up with his palms flat on the desktop. Doctor Lecter snagged a handful of his hair and pulled Will's head back so that his throat was bared to him, humming at Will's discontented noise. He brought his lips to the flushed skin beneath Will's jaw, breathing the boy's scent before placing a chaste open mouthed kiss there.

Doctor Lecter's grip on Will's hair was unrelenting, and despite the dull pain it brought him Will encouraged it, tilting his head in compliance. He spread his legs for the man to draw closer and come between them, silently begging for it. His fingers twitched with the urge to hold the man's head in place, and his head rolled slightly. He felt the press of teeth against his neck way before the pain of the bite, but Will still cried out as if it were a suprise.

Doctor Lecter licked over the tender area, soothing the sting before sinking his teeth into a different spot. Will had broke out in a sweat, the arousal between his legs beginning to throb with every kiss pressed to his feverish skin. He pleaded quietly to be taken properly, spread out somewhere flat and fucked. He whined and brought his hand behind his head to meet Doctor Lecter's, digging his nails into the man's hand and arm.

Will jerked at the feeling of a hand on his cock, grabbing him through the confines of his jeans and beginning to knead at his erection. Doctor Lecter's mouth finally left Will's throat, his face moving away to look at the boy. Will's back began to arch in the slightest, his eyes screwed shut again as he rutted against Doctor Lecter's hand. A groan slipped past the man's lips, and he let go of Will's hair so that he could touch his face instead, fingers skimming his cheek softly before dipping into his open mouth.

Will's eyes fluttered open, and he didn't hesitate to suck eagerly on the digits. Fresh, jagged scratches decorated Doctor Lecter's forearm and the back of his hand. Will wanted to lick his

arms. He moaned around Doctor Lecter's fingers, sliding his tongue between them and sucking noisily. He longed to be chastised again, spoken to roughly with a warning hanging to every word. Doctor Lecter pulled his fingers free, using both hands to slowly unbutton Will's pants. Will was patient, lifting his hips for Doctor Lecter as he was rid of his pants.

Will sat up and tugged his shirt over his head, nearly moaning in relief as cold air touched the exposed skin.

"Listen to me very carefully, Will," Doctor Lecter said, opening a drawer in his desk and bringing out a small bottle of lotion, "I want you to go into your bedroom and lay down. You will get yourself ready with this and wait for me to join you." He pressed the bottle into Will's hands, "Understand?"

Will nodded, accepting the bottle and sliding off of the desk, "Yes sir," He responded softly.

Doctor Lecter smiled at him, "Good." He waved the boy off, bending down to collect the scattered papers as Will left.

Will felt vulnerable walking through the house in only his underwear. He held tightly to the lotion in his hands, his cock stirring in interest. He turned into the guestroom, leaving the light off as he felt for the bed in the dark. When his hands touched the mattress, he fell onto the bed, eagerly taking his underwear off and freeing his erection. He opened the bottle and dumped some of the lotion in his hand, rubbing it into his fingers so that they were slick. He laid back on the pillows and bent his knees, beginning to chew on his lip in anticipation. He felt the rim experimentally, before slowly pressing his index finger into the hole. It was uncomfortable, and he had to force it inside before he could pull it out again. He clenched around the single finger, spreading his legs some more before attempting to work in the second one. He whined at the feeling of being stretched, wanting to give up and jerk off instead.

Will pressed on, eventually slipping a third finger inside of himself and carefully pushing the digits as deep as he could without his hand cramping. He panted, moaning into the darkness for Doctor Lecter as he tried to fuck himself. The bottle squelched as he blindly squirted more lotion onto his fingers, lifting his hips and wiggling them deeper until he cried out in his effort. He clenched around his fingers, sighing in relief at the sound of footsteps approaching the bedroom.

"Please come and help me," Will said breathlessly.

"You've been so patient for me, Will, don't give in now," Doctor Lecter responded from somewhere in the room.

Will could hear the sound of clothing being shed, fabrics rustling softly but never hitting the floor. Eventually the bed dipped, and Will's breath caught in his throat. A careful hand grabbed his wrist, pulling his fingers out of himself and Will immediately wanted to touch the emptiness. Doctor Lecter prodded the boy's hole with his own fingers, feeling the wet rim and making Will squirm.

"Oh, Will," The man breathed, beginning to inch his fingers inside, rubbing against the walls.

"Ple-ase," Will begged, folding his knees onto his chest in an act of submission.

Doctor Lecter caressed Will's face with his dry hand, before his touch left him completely. The man felt around on the mattress for the bottle, finding it left open, to his discontent. He squirted some into his hand, using it to slick himself for an easy entrance. Will continued to squirm on top of the comforter, brushing his stiff nipples and panting through his impatience. He sighed brokenly when the doctor finally began to push inside of him.

Will canted his hips toward the man, gripping the backs of his knees so tight, he thought he might bruise. Doctor Lecter was using both of his hands to smooth the boy's hair, pausing to *feel* for a moment. He shushed Will, asking him in quiet tones for patience.

Will cried out, his legs quaking in his grip from the impact of the first real thrust. He sucked in air, realized that his nose was running but did nothing about it, too scared to loosen his grip on his legs. Doctor Lecter didn't waste time teasing the boy any longer, his soft touches once again rough, squeezing Will's sides painfully as he entered the boy again and again. He listened to Will's pitiful noises, ranging from soft whimpers to loud cries that rang in his ears deliciously.

Will's legs slipped from his grasp, his palms slick with sweat. He ran a hand messy across his face to wipe his nose. He yanked at the sheets, rolling his hips in an attempt to take the man deeper, wanting to impress the Doctor as much as he wanted to reach his own orgasm. He fisted his erection tight in his hand, pumping furiously until he came in long bursts all over his stomach. His cock twitched, limp but still threatening interest with every drive of the man's hips, pushing him up the bed.

Will had been warbling to himself, moaning weakly when he felt Doctor Lecter's release. The man pushed his orgasm deep inside of Will, grabbing the boy's hair as though he would float away. Will wiped at his face, feeling dirty. Doctor Lecter pulled out with a small grunt, and for a moment, Will expected him to keel on top of him. He didn't, however, merely slumped forward for a moment of rest before leaving the bed.

"You won't stay with me?" Will asked quietly.

"Neither of us are staying here," Doctor Lecter responded, his voice heavy from lack of energy, "You especially are in need of a shower." He said, sitting back on the bed beside Will's laying body.

Will turned over, draping himself over the man's legs, "You'll have to carry me." He joked.

"Very well," Doctor Lecter said, amused as he moved to pick the spent boy up bridal style, "My fascinating boy.." He touched Will's face, who drew into the touch.

Devozione Divino

Chapter Notes

> You would think that enough people have shown interest in this that I would stop being anxious when posting new chapters, but alas. One more to go.

After three days in Doctor Lecter's home, Will had began to wonder if the man was even interested in eating him anymore. Surely he was, Will thought to himself as he rounded corners looking for the man. He could appreciate the beauty of the large estate, but not the many rooms and how easily he got lost in the damnable hallways. He hadn't seen Doctor Lecter but once that day, in the kitchen as soon as he had woken up. Will had sat with his breakfast in front of him, searching Doctor Lecter's brown eyes for any signs of regret and found none. After that, Will had gone to the guest room and read the entirety of "*The Egyptian Guide to Cannibalism"*.

Will paused, listening as the beginnings of an instrumental song peaked his ears. *Of course he would listen to classical music,* Will thought as he padded toward the source of the music. He emerged in the sitting room to find Doctor Lecter reclined peacefully with a book. The man exhaled softly,

"Good afternoon, Will," He greeted, and Will was grateful that he had not tried to lock his eyes.

"Hello," Will responded, climbing into Doctor Lecter's chaise and wiggling his way into a comfortable position against the man.

Doctor Lecter shifted to accommodate their new position, reaching his arm around Will's middle to hold onto his book. Will brushed his fingertips over the red scratches on the psychiatrist's forearm, feeling for a moment the beginnings of arousal. He tipped his chin up slightly, watching Doctor Lecter's eyes dart from one side of the page to the other, until they looked down on him.

"Do you need something?" Doctor Lecter asked.

"More books in English, would be nice," Will said, mostly to be difficult.

"There are plenty in the study," Doctor Lecter turned the page of his own book.

"When will you return to work?" Will asked.

"Tomorrow," Doctor Lecter said simply, and Will could tell that he was becoming impatient with the chatter.

"What will you do with me?" Will asked, nonchalant as he contemplated digging his nails over the doctor's scratches.

"You will stay in the guestroom," Doctor Lecter's words were laced with an unspoken warning, "With your books." He added, his voice back to normal.

Will suppressed the urge to shiver, bit his lower lip and nodded to indicate that he understood. He began to pick at the blood colored scabs, careful as he slid his fingernail underneath each piece. Doctor Lecter didn't flinch.

"Will you keep me forever, doctor?" Will inquired carefully, unsure of what he wanted to convey with his words, "I've begun to think you've grown attached.." Will lifted a hand to touch the man's face lightly, admiring the blood bubbling up from his arm.

Doctor Lecter swallowed and grabbed Will's hand, placing it back at the boy's side. Will smiled a bit vexatiously, but didn't make a move.

"You could keep me around and use me whenever you like," Will brushed a thumb over the fresh blood, smearing it in the process, "I won't stop you.. I'll always want it," He paused, licking the pad of his finger when he felt eyes watching him, "Yours alone until you finally kill me, and even then I won't stop you."

"Where's your book, Will? You're being a nuisance." Doctor Lecter interjected.

Will sighed almost dramatically, "I finished it."

"Get a new one." Doctor Lecter suggested.

Will nuzzled silently into Doctor Lecter's chest, feeling when the man drew in a deep breath. He bit his own tongue to be quiet, listening to the calm music with his eyes closed. He wished that Doctor Lecter would put him in his lap so that they were closer. He could imagine that when the man ate him, they would be closer than any two people alike them. The thought roused something akin to posessiveness inside of his chest, and he swallowed many times to get rid of it.

"Stand, darling, I'll need to get into the kitchen soon," Doctor Lecter finally spoke, closing his book.

"Yes," Will climbed over the arm of the chaise. He lingered by the chair, out of the way but still very close, wanting to be called *darling* again.

Doctor Lecter didn't speak again, merely stood and then paused for a long time, looking at the boy. Will fidgeted, forcing himself to stare directly into brown eyes. His own eyes were wide with something that made Doctor Lecter's stomach lurch uncomfortably. He stepped closer, taking Will's head into his hands,

Will jumped, but not out of suprise or fright. He tipped his head up for the brief kiss that Doctor Lecter offered him, his hands twitching to hold onto the other. The man froze, lips hovering over Will's but immobile.

"Can I have you tonight?" Doctor Lecter asked, touching Will's jaw softly.

Will's eyes fluttered, his heart skipping at the question. He was scared for a moment, and then he was nodding feverently, clutching to Doctor Lecter's shirt, "Yes," The whisper was repeated over and over again, the desire to be consumed overwhelming.

Doctor Lecter sighed, tipping Will's face up and admiring his submissive state, his trusting eyes. He held Will to his person for what seemed like a long time, before he was leading him by the hand to the study. He sat Will in his own chair while he disappeared for a brief moment, before reappearing in the doorway quietly. Will stood, and he was very aware that Doctor Lecter was now hiding a lethal instrument. He fell into the man's arms, touched his neck, his chest, his face, pressed himself into the other and sighed contently.

"Do it," Will whispered, his face pressed against Doctor Lecter's chest. His eyes were squeezed shut.

Doctor Lecter opened his mouth, and then closed it. He breathed in, and maneuvered the needle from his back pocket, pushing the plastic cap off with his thumb nail. He could hear Will's quick breathing, feel him tense at the noise of plastic hitting the ground. Will gasped when the needle broke the flesh of his neck, moaning as the toxin spread through his blood like fire, and then he was limp in the Doctor's arms.

Will's eyes opened slowly, and the first thing he noticed was that he was cold, and then as he shakily brought himself to sit up, an agonizing ache in every limb. His lips trembled as he looked around cautiously and remembered his surroundings. He was sitting in the church parking lot, and very much alone. He felt his eyes burn as realization was replaced with anger, and he stood with the legs of a newborn deer, spinning around in desperate search for Doctor Lecter's black car. It was nowhere.

The feeling of abandonment was nearly crippling, and he couldn't help the helpless whine that ripped itself from his throat, an ugly noise that echoed in the empty lot. What could Doctor Lecter have possibly thought he was going to do? Why did he bring him back there like a whore who had already done her service? Did he want him to kill himself? Oh yes, that had to be it, why else would he just leave him? His doctor was smart, he wouldn't do this if not for a reason.

Will thought about this as he made his way to the church, the doors unlocked as he thought they would be. There was a group of three people already there, and they lifted their eyes to him politely as he entered. He didn't look at them, his eyes were focused on one thing: The flag that bore the lamb of God, sitting tall beside the alter. At the top was a nice, sharp piece that beckoned Will.

"Young man!" A woman called out as Will kicked the flag over, watching as it hit the ground with a heavy thud, "Young man, what are you doing?!" The panicked cry turned into a

scream as Will jerked the flag up and brought it to his throat, preparing to impale himself with no grace or finesse. The blow would not have killed him if he had succeeded.

"When will you talk to me, Will?" Doctor Chilton asked, his voice delicate.

Will sat across from the man, lopsided in his chair and staring at the ceiling. Back where he began. An unstable mind being picked apart by someone unworthy of doing so. He turned his head ever so slightly to look at his therapist, before clearing his throat loudly.

"Doctor Chilton, would you say that an unstable mind would taste bad in comparison to a healthy one?" Will asked this with an eerie calmness to his voice.

Doctor Chilton was silent for a very long time, the shock of finally hearing Will's voice again mingling with the shock of his choice in words. He wrote something down in an angry scrawl.

"Do you often think about consuming people's minds?" Doctor Chilton tried to study Will's expresionless face, and was futile once again, "The day you tried to kill yourself, was it an attempt to silence your own mind?" The man sighed, "Will?" He tried again when there was no response.

Will hummed, and Doctor Chilton massaged his own temples.

Will was happy to be home, despite the way that his family had decided to respond to his reappearance. He didn't like how his father acted as though his attempt at suicide was something he had expected. How his mother was so reluctant to let him alone even to sleep in his own room. How his friends, few in number in the first place, were too awkward or scared to contact him. He didn't feel like anyone around him genuinely cared for him, but rather acted as such out of obligation. For appearances.

Will didn't sleep well at night, as his dreams were plagued of Doctor Lecter. Bending him until he was two broken halves, ripping him apart with rows and rows of long, sharp teeth, kissing him tenderly and then snapping his neck carelessly. Will could only deal with this by occupying his hands with his keyboard, typing long emails to the man and sending every damn one of them, no matter the content.

"I can't help but wonder why you left me like that. I would have taken a knife instead. I would have done anything for you, I still will. I don't know what I did to deserve such cruelty, how could you just leave me. Did you think I deserved to live, doctor? I don't. You

had a chance to deliver a mercy killing upon a ticking mind, but you didn't. You're weak and I hate you."

- Will

"I'll kill them all in my place. It'll be your fault. I was ready to die, I wanted you to do it. You made me love you and then you made it clear what you felt for me. There's nothing else I can do. Someone has to die and if not me then who? You?"

- Will

"I can't sleep, I barely want to eat, it's painful, doctor. I'm doing your job for you, and it's agonizing. Come and have another chance, you can have me again. I'd die for you, don't you see the opportunities. I'm yours, I don't even belong to myself anymore."

- Will

No replies ever came, and Will hated him every day his emails went unacknowledged. A small part of him wanted desperately to think that Doctor Lecter was reading them all, and that was enough. He hid his laptop during the day, unable to think about what he would do without it. He wasn't even interested in reading about crime scenes anymore, he only wanted Doctor Lecter.

After a month of this, a new figure began to cloud Will's thoughts, a darkling that served only to ridicule it seemed. It made Will snap his head around in public, thinking that he had seen it only for there to be nothing. His mother would duck her head and grab his hand tight, whispering for him to hold still. He would flush, but feel no remorse.

It was worse at night, after Will had stared at his old emails from Doctor Lecter, re-reading over and over again those words. "*My dear, Winston..*" He was Winston, he would have to remind himself. Then, out of the corner of his eye, watching him carry out his pitiful night routine was the stagman. Stoic, mocking him from across the room without even speaking.

"Leave me alone, Will hissed quietly at the figure, who bowed his elegant head, but didn't move otherwise, "Stop looking at me." He demanded in an angry whisper, slamming his laptop shut.

A small smile turned up the stagman's lips, clearly amused by the boy's attempts to get rid of him, when it was the boy who had summoned him in the first place. Created in a dream one fitful night, and then a concrete presence in Will's poor, troubled mind. His face resembled Doctor Lecter's, though he was much taller, his elegant antlers giving the illusion even more so. He creeped towards Will, lifeless eyes focused on his trembling form.

"Be thee gone, demon," Will said halfheartedly.

"Poor Will.." The stagman's voice was never able to get above a faint whisper, always close to Will's ear and always ominously spoken. His touch was ice cold against Will's face, "Why am I here?"

"God, I wish I knew," Will responded, an angry frown plaguing his face. A rumbling laughter echoed off the walls, bringing Will to shiver.

"I am your new coping mechanism," The stagman's long limbs entrapped Will, holding him to the mattress, "The vice that you cling to because there is nothing else left.." Will began to pant, a headache forming on one side of his head, "Dear, Will," The illusion purred, *"Darling."* It taunted.

Will struggled underneath the invisible weight that pinned him down, reaching out blindly and grabbing at nothing but air. He bolted up in the bed, drawing in ragged breaths as his eyes darted around the room. He was alone, of course he was. Will scrubbed at his face with the sleeves of his shirt, wiping away tears that threatened to fall. A thumping that had once been a faint feeling was now painful, ringing in his eardrums. It was the silence, he couldn't stand it, didn't want it.

"Come back," Will whispered, his voice thick with tears that the stagman licked at as he reappeared. The thumping was gone.

The tongue was like a flame, singing against his cheeks and jaw. More tears flowed and dropped into his lap, and he imagined that it was his blood that slid down his face. The stagman stared him in the face, his lifeless eyes boring straight into Will's brown ones as he cried. He couldn't look anywhere but forward, and the stagman's lips were not moving, despite the voices that Will heard on either side of him.

"What will you do when the sun comes up and you must face what you have done?" The Stagman's question confused Will.

"What have I done?" Will asked, his eyebrows furrowed.

Will's gaze dropped to his hands, which were dripping in blood. His breathing quickened in his panic as he looked around, the bodies of his parents dead at his feet. He let out a cry of disbelief, bringing his hands to his face and smearing blood there in the process. The stagman watched from the corner as Will fell to the ground amongst his parents.

"What have you done, Will?" The voice belonged to Doctor Lecter, and as soon as he looked up,

Will shot up in his bed, his chest heaving and his eyes wet. There were dried tears on his face. He wondered what time he had finally gone to sleep last night.

"-And then my hands were covered in blood," Will finished his little story, raising his palms up to his face as though he expected them to be painted red.

"Who did you kill, Will?" Doctor Chilton asked, curiously. He was writing everything down.

Will paused, thought for a moment, and then smiled before saying, "You."

Doctor Chilton's pen froze, and he raised his eyebrows. The man swallowed thickly before leaning back in his chair, which creaked at the action. Will watched as the stagman placed his hands on top of Doctor Chilton's shoulders, stoic as always, aswell as beautiful. Will's smile widened for him.

"Why do you think that you are having dreams of killing me?" Doctor Chilton asked, looking as though he wasn't so curious this time.

"Oh, that's simple, really.." Will stared at the stagman, "Because I want to."

Will's words hung in the air, and Doctor Chilton was visibly uncomfortable. His eyes began to dart to the door, but he was impressively composed, given the sitiuation. Will continued to smile, and as soon as he began to wish for the stagman to come to him, it was so. The boy knew that he looked crazy sitting in his usual lopsided way, smiling at nothing and reaching for the ceiling. It didn't matter. Will's blue eyes honed back in on Doctor Chilton, and he sat up correctly in his chair, studying the man's face. He was scared.

"Oh," Will shook his head, "Please," His voice had raised and the tone changed, "Please, no, no, WILL, STOP!" He shrieked, clutching at his throat and falling limp on his chair, eyes blown wide as if he were frightened. He reminded himself of a cat, stiff with rigor mortis.

"Is this fun, Will, are you having fun?" Doctor Chilton had started writing again, his tone unamused. He had broken from his scared stupor, "Because, I'm not anymore, and I'd like for you to cooperate."

"Doctor Chilton, please," Will droned, still slumped in his seat from playing dead, "Stop writing, no one will read it." He stood then, clearing the distance between them in a couple careful strides, "No, no, listen, I'm going to tell you things," Will assured the man, "Like you wanted," He added, putting a soft hand on his shoulder as if to bring him comfort.

Doctor Chilton eyed the boy wearily, his pen shaking in his hand out of nerves. Will watched it jerk back and forth, intrigued. His eyes found Doctor Chilton's, very blatantly so,

"I think that I would like to see your heart," Will announced with a faraway look gathering in his eyes, "I think I will." He announced very matter of factly, before snatching the psychiatrist's pen and jamming it into the side of his neck. Blood bubbled from the small wound, before beginning to slowly slide down and drop onto Doctor Chilton's shoulder.

Doctor Chilton cried out and reached for the pen with frantic hands. Will knocked the man's clipboard out of his hands, before stomping over to his desk and snatching a letter opener off the top of it. Doctor Chilton's eyes widened at the instrument, and he shook his head, mouth fumbling to form words,

"No, Will-"

"Oh, please," Will called back to the man in his quickly breaking voice, before flinging himself forward and shoving the letter opener into Doctor Chilton's chest. He began to suck

in deep breaths, staring wide eyed as a red bloom began to creep from around the sharp object. He snatched the letter opener out of Doctor Chilton with a gasp, watching him stumble to the ground. He gripped the instrument tightly, staring at the bloodied tip through frightened tears.

The stagman stood beside Will, touching his hair softly before Will hit the ground, the letter opener being pried from his fist. He flexed his hands, a dull ache beginning in between his eyes. He was losing consciousness.

Il Tradimento e Redenzione

Chapter Notes

> First, thank you to everyone who has read faithfully for the past few weeks. Next, I would like to address how I wrote our sweet Will. I've read that encephalitis is quite similar to schizophrenia, so take it as you wish. He is schizophrenic because I am, and I can confidently write about why it can be horrible at times. His suffering is my own. Please enjoy the last chapter of Safety Net...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Five Weeks

Will's head rested against a cold table as he watched the door with sleepy eyes. His hands were cuffed to said table, and the chains made noises of protest anytime he shifted to alleviate pressure in his neck. He was supposed to be meeting with Doctor Chilton, who was finally out of the hospital and ready to choose his fate. If it was up to Will, he wouldn't move. He would rot right here in the correctional facility. It didn't matter that he looked out of place, with his curly hair and unsure eyes. Sticking out like an angel in hell amongst some of Virginia's most unruly boys and troublesome punks.

The metal door clicked, and in walked Doctor Chilton, who turned a smile upon Will as he took his place across from him. Will's eyes followed him from the door to the chair, and he took his sweet time sitting himself up straight. They looked at eachother for a while, and suddenly it was like they were back in Doctor Chilton's office.

"Hello, Will," The man finally spoke. He swallowed, and it was a wet noise. He was uncomfortable.

"Will I stay?" Will asked.

"Oh, no," Doctor Chilton shook his head, sitting himself back easily in his chair, grunting as if it pained him, or he was scared that it would, "I shouldn't have continued our therapy, it's my fault that you lashed out. It was only a matter of time before you committed another violent act, such as the one in the church.."

Will's eyebrows furrowed, "Where will I go?" His voice was quiet.

"You'll be placed in a psychiatric unit in Baltimore," Doctor Chilton responded as though the words brought him great pleasure, "You won't be able to hurt yourself or anyone else. You'll be safe." He said.

Will shook his head frantically, frustrated tears gathering in his eyes, "No!" He exclaimed, and his cuffs made a great deal of noise as he threw himself against the table, "You don't want me safe, you want me miserable!" Will groaned.

Doctor Chilton tutted, shaking his head at the act of petulance. An attempt on his very life, and the dear boy expected to be given what he wanted. He stood then, his hand hovering over his suit jacket where Will had stabbed him. He lowered it to his pocket instead, observing the boy for a moment, before heading to the door.

"Goodbye, Will," Doctor Chilton said, and then the heavy door closed.

Will breathed hard against the cold table, staring after the man through burning tears. The door opened again and Will shot up, pulling against the table. He didn't want to be touched anymore. A paroxysm overcame his body, and he thrashed against the orderlies as soon as his arms were free, frantic whines leaving his throat. He had no reason to behave like this, nobody was hurting him and nobody had threatened to. Will felt as though he could fight anyone at that moment.

Will's mind was never quiet, and he was never alone now. Even when there was no one keeping close watch over him, making sure that he is fed and kept clean, as well as in line. He could always see the stagman in his peripheral vision, moving silently. The juvenile ward is far from Wolftrap, so his parents did not often visit, and Will was fine with that. He didn't want his mother's pity, or his father's disappointment.

They went into the parlor room in groups at assigned times. During these times he read by himself, close to a window that was placed too high up for anyone to reach, let alone look through. Sometimes the wall with the window was warm, and Will pressed his cheek against it and pretended it was direct sunlight warming his skin. If she wasn't occupied with a book of her own, Will's acquaintance Abigail would join him.

Will would allow Abigail's company because she was interesting, but not full of questions. She had a scar on her neck and a quaint face, with blue eyes much like his own. She was a fine friend for Will, because they could communicate only with looks, sharing books and Will's beloved sunshine wall. The only time Will couldn't stand to have her around was when the stagman would become impatient with the lack of attention he was given. It would stalk Abigail in circles, the presence unwavering even as Will rubbed his eyes until they hurt. When Will began to imagine Abigail bleeding from her neck and mouth, he shoved her away.

Will was not with Abigail at that moment, or anyone at all, blessedly. He always expected to be at peace during the night, alone in his bed and with quietness ringing in his ears. It was

never like that. His atrocious monster demanded his eyes, hanging over his laying body and tormenting him. Will imagined being impaled on the elegant rack over and over again, staining the white walls and bed with his blood. When his eyes opened, his chest was not gored, and the stagman had not moved from his spot above him.

Will blinked into the darkness, touching the tar black tips of the stagman's rack. He spread his hand out and felt nothing when his palm was pierced through. He closed his eyes, and was able to lower his hand when he opened them again.

"You are disappointed," The stagman spoke, and his voice echoed from every corner of the room, "Do not rely on the fantasy of your head to fulfill the longing in your spirit."

Will's face twisted up, "Don't talk to me anymore," He demanded, and the volume of his own voice startled him.

Will stared into the eyes of the stagman until he was too tired to hold his own eyes open. His brain buzzed and he was too hot for comfort, but sleep would bring an end to his worries for a short time. He dreamed that the stagman was no man at all, but rather a harmless fawn. The deer frolicked for a while on it's new legs until it began to grow. It became huge with age, now sporting lethal antlers like that of the stagman. The buck used it's new weapon to impale Abigail, pinning her to the mossy ground and jerking it's beautiful head until her stomach was a mess of flesh and intestine. It raised it's head to stare at Will, eyes black and soulless.

Doctor Bloom visited Will the next morning. She said that she treated Abigail, and smiled when Will perked at the name.

"You're friends?" Doctor Bloom asked.

"I guess," Will responded, "Would it be inappropriate if I went with you?" He asked, looking to the woman hopefully. The dull walls in his room drove him crazy during the day. There was too much room for the stagman to move about.

"You're not my patient, Will, and there's not supposed to be anybody but me and Abigail in the room." Doctor Bloom was not chastising him.

"I'm nobody's patient yet," Will responded, though he was happy to say so.

Doctor Bloom hummed, pausing as if she were thinking, "That's no good," She finally said, pushing out a distressed sigh, "If you'll allow me to set you up with another therapist, then I'll ask Abigail if she's comfortable with you attending."

Will frowned, "Who?"

Doctor Bloom's smile returned, and it was a sweet thing that made Will want to hug her, "A good friend of mine. He has experience with people of your condition, and I trust him to help you." She said.

"So.. Group therapy until then?" Will was again, hopeful.

"If Abigail is comfortable with that," Doctor Bloom reminded him, giving him a pointed stare as she stood to leave.

Will watched her leave, and felt as though he should thank her. He didn't.

"Will you look Abigail in the eyes while you tell Doctor Bloom about your dreams?" The stagman whispered, "About me?" He added in a low hiss.

"Yes." Will said to the empty room.

Will closed his eyes and listened to the stagman talk to him, watching the outline of it's lithe body move in front of his eyelids. He opened his eyes when the door opened again, and it was Doctor Bloom. She gestured for him to join her, one eye closed in teasing cheer. Will felt like a child who's mother wanted him desperately to laugh. He gave her a tight lipped smile as he stood to join her.

"Doctor Bloom, I'm so curious," Will spoke up, as he followed the woman, "Why aren't you scared of me?"

"What you did wasn't your fault, Will." Doctor Bloom didn't look at him.

It was , Will wanted to hiss. His ears began to ring, the sound of a heavy deer's hooves beginning to drown out the sound of Doctor Bloom's heels. He faltered for a moment, pausing to hold his head.

"Will?" Doctor Bloom's voice broke through to him.

"Sorry," Will muttered, dropping his arms, "The halls are loud." He said after several moments of avoiding the woman's concerned gaze.

Doctor Bloom said nothing, but took his arm in her own until they reached Abigail's room. The stagman hung over Abigail threateningly as soon as Will could see her. He resisted the urge to stand in the doorway and went straight to Abigail's bed, sitting himself down on the edge beside her.

"Doctor Bloom said that it will be easy to treat us both because we're here for similar reasons." Abigail said.

"I tried to kill someone," Will blurted, and he felt a pang of disappointment at the girl's lack of response.

"Someone tried to kill me." Abigail responded in a watery voice. She looked smaller, somehow.

Doctor Bloom's eyes never left the two as she sat herself down in the single chair in the room. She crossed her legs and arms, and cleared her throat,

"So. Abigail said you guy's read together?"

Will nodded, tilting his head back to look at the overhead light. It was brighter than the one he had, "Who tried to kill you?" He asked.

"Will." Doctor Bloom's voice was hard.

"Sorry," Will could feel both sets of ice blue on his face.

"Can we do what we had been doing?" Abigail asked the woman, sliding a book from under her pillow.

"We've just been reading chapters from one of my old favorite books," Doctor Bloom explained as Abigail handed Will the book to look at. Flannery O'Conner.

"It's healing in a way," Abigail spoke, "Easier than talking about what happened." She continued, a bit tentatively.

"Defeats the purpose of therapy then, right?" Will asked.

"Not necessarily. Sometimes just sharing company with someone can be therapeutic." Doctor Bloom said.

Will handed Doctor Bloom the book, watching her open it up to the marked page. Will sat back on his palms as Doctor Bloom began to read *"A View of the Woods",* his mind wandering back to Doctor Lecter's seemingly infinite amount of reading material. Did his dear doctor enjoy Gothic novels like Doctor Bloom did?

Later, in the parlor room Will and Abigail gathered against the sunshine wall, books between them but ignored all the same. They both had questions all of the sudden.

"Who tried to kill you?" Will repeated.

"My father. He was killed by the police," Abigail responded. She was visibly uncomfortable, but willing to speak about it.

"And your mother?" Will pressed.

"Dead too." Was all she said, "Who did you try to kill?"

"Myself, first, and then my therapist. I hated him, he was so-," Will's face scrunched up, and he gestured with his hand. The beginnings of a smile crossed the girl's face.

"Do you want to kill Doctor Bloom?" Abigail began to thumb through her book. Emily Dickinson.

"No," Will replied dismissively.

Abigail said nothing, but didn't look convinced. Will studied her for a moment. He felt as if their odd bond was broken. He stared at his own book, studying the ripped cover. He imagined that Abigail would want to pick his brain apart now. Her eyes were huge and glassy, full of questions, and Will was scared for her to blink.

Will ate his breakfast slowly despite the gnawing hunger that he felt in his gut. Doctor Bloom would be introducing him to his new therapist that day, and he was dreading having to drag himself out of his room. He liked having joint sessions with Abigail. Liked the idea of therapeutic reading. He knew that the new therapist would want to shake his brain open like a child searching for a prize. Like Doctor Chilton had. He hissed at the thought and pushed his tray away.

"I'm a therapist," Doctor Lecter had said.

Will recalled the way he had very nearly wrinkled his nose at the idea.

"Why do you think that you are ready to die?" Doctor Lecter had asked, in an obvious attempt to peek into his brain.

"Fascinating boy." The voice in his head echoed.

Will screamed and kicked his tray to the floor, taking satisfaction at the way the plastic clanged with a loud noise. His nostrils flared as he stared at the spilled scrambled eggs. He could feel hot tears threatening to escape. He thought about screaming again, but bit down on his tongue, fearing that he would have to explain his outbursts. He drew in a shaky breath, sliding off of the bed and kneeling on the floor to clean up his mess. Doctor Bloom would be here soon.

Will spoke quietly to the stagman while he waited for Doctor Bloom, taking comfort in it's hushed voice. There was a knocking on the door, and then Doctor Bloom's patient eyes were on his form.

"Who were you talking to, Will?" Doctor Bloom asked.

Will's heart skipped and he stared past the woman, to where the stagman stood towering above her. He swallowed and forced a smile, shrugging his shoulders. This satisfied her, and she stepped into the room.

"Get your coat and boots, Will. Doctor Lecter is waiting for us to join him," Doctor Bloom instructed with poised lips, her hands in the pockets of her peacoat.

Will blinked at her for several moments, pausing with his coat halfway on, "Doctor..." He swallowed against his dry throat, "Lecter?" His voice was quiet.

"My friend, remember?" She paused, "Your new therapist."

Will shoved his other arm through his coat and laced his boots with shaky fingers. Doctor Bloom stopped him before he could leave the room and buttoned his navy coat. He followed close to the woman's side as they exited the hospital's backdoor, which opened to a quaint

garden area. Will had been out there as often as he was able, but now the sight of the budding plants brought him discomfort.

Will was able to recognize the man's form before he even glimpsed his face. Doctor Lecter stepped away from the wilted Goldenrod he had been inspecting, a smile on his face that he turned upon the two approaching him. Doctor Bloom returned the smile, a gentle hand on Will's back. The boy could feel himself beginning to tremble, unable to look at the man's face even as he stood before him. What was he to do? Feign amnesia? *Yes, that's it,* the stagman encouraged the thought, *Clever Will! You've never seen him in your life, have you?*

"No." Will accidentally said out loud.

"No?" Doctor Bloom repeated amusedly, moving her hand from his back and onto his shoulder, feeling the boy tremble. She didn't want him to fear Doctor Lecter. She knew that his condition would get better under her good friend and trusted mentor's care.

"Hello," The sound of Doctor Lecter's voice brought goose flesh to Will's neck, "You must be Will." He said, removing his hand from his pocket to shake the boy's own.

Will swallowed again, "Doctor.." His eyebrows came together, presenting the image of thought as he took the man's hand.

"Lecter." The doctor finished for him, an impressed gleam flashing in his eyes.

Will let his hand drop from the man's grasp, nodding, "Thank you." He said.

"It won't slip your mind again, I'm sure. We'll be spending plenty of time together. Alana and I would both like to see you get better, Will." Doctor Lecter insisted.

"Alana?" Will tipped his head up to smile at the woman, "How pretty." He remarked.

Doctor Bloom laughed, "Thank you," She grew serious again, but her cobalt eyes remained pleased, "Will's flourished. I knew that he needed something more than what Chilton had tried." She touched his face softly with a gloved hand, "I usually read to them, and then we talk about whatever they feel like. Abigail's done much better too. I think Will helped."

Will flushed under the attention, shifting his eyes to the Goldenrod plants.

"I'd hate to take him from you ladies," Doctor Lecter mused, "However, I do find that schizophrenic patients appreciate my rapt attention."

Hearing it spoken out loud made Will want to curl in on himself. He glanced to Doctor Lecter, who was already watching him fondly. *He didn't mean to attack you,* Will told himself.

"Will we read?" Will asked boldly.

"If you'd like that. I have many books I could bring for us." Doctor Lecter responded.

Will nodded, bringing his lower lip between his teeth. He dropped his gaze again, touching a cold fingertip to one of the brown blooms before him. It was quiet for a moment.

"I'll come to check on you this afternoon before I leave. We'll miss you today," Doctor Bloom said to Will, touching his shoulder again.

They both locked eyes as they listened to the woman's heeled boots leave them. Will was frozen to his spot, unknowingly crushing the dead flower between his fingers. The heavy door closed and Will exhaled.

Doctor Lecter straightened his back, drinking in Will's image with his amber orbs. He tutted softly, "I'm disappointed, Will." He finally spoke.

"I can't say that I know what you mean, doctor," Will responded, tearing his eyes away from the man.

"Am I being punished, darling boy?" Will pinched his lips together, eyes growing wet at the man's condescending tone, "For wanting to see you live?" Cold hands touched Will's neck softly, caressing him as he spoke.

Will resisted the urge to throw himself into Doctor Lecter's arms. His chest was beginning to bob with the urge to cry. He *hated* him for this.

"Why are you doing this?" Will asked, torn between dropping forward and continuing to pretend not to know the other.

"Did you expect to come to Baltimore and see nothing of me? To forget about me? Will you are smarter-"

Will curled his hand around the ceramic pot and pulled it from the shelf. The pot shattered, trapping soil and the poor flowers beneath it. Doctor Lecter was silenced, looking at the boy threateningly. It sent a prickling sensation up his spine, but otherwise did not scare him.

"You *left* me," Will hissed, feeling traitorous tears slide down his cheeks, "You were weak and I suffered for it." Will's lips twitched into a pathetic smile.

Doctor Lecter grabbed Will by his shoulders, digging his fingertips in deep despite the boy's thick coat. His jaw was set dangerously, and for a moment Will thought that he would be struck. The man brought Will closer to himself, sliding a hand into his hair and pushing the brunette's face against his chest in a posessive embrace.

"I pitied you," Doctor Lecter spoke into his ear, "My very own Cyparissus, dangerous but tactless," Will's eyes closed, leaning into the man as he spoke, "You'd have taken anything I could give you. Pain, pleasure-,"

"Yes." Will agreed.

"You've felt a great loss at my hand, Will, have you not?" Doctor Lecter muttered.

"Yes." Will repeated.

"And yet..?" Doctor Lecter curled a hand around Will's neck, holding his breath as he waited.

"I told you already," Will's voice wobbled slightly, "It feels like I've told you a million times."

"Again." Doctor Lecter insisted.

"As long as you'll have me," Will countered, drawing a hand to grab the edge of the man's coat.

"I've not come here because I wish to torment you, Will." Doctor Lecter said.

"Liar," Will hissed, pressing himself closer to the other, "You've come to get another taste of the boy so willing to drown himself in the blood of others for you." He breathed out almost dreamily, "I'm sick, doctor.." He muttered in a sweet voice.

Doctor Lecter spent a long moment holding Will to his person, breathing greedily the flame - licked scent that radiated from the boy in delicious waves. He took Will's chin in his fingers, tipping his head up so that they looked eachother in the eyes.

"Dreadfully so, sweet William." Doctor Lecter divulged.

Chapter End Notes

I posted this chapter early so that I could spend this weekend working on the sequel. Oh, yes. I'm hardly done with poor Will. The next fic will be more fleshed out. You can be looking for it soon enough. Until then, friends.

My Tumblr, because maybe you're interested: @MilitaryReflexes

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!